

William Friedman's Mantelpiece December 6



HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH: In the past, *History Today* has featured several photos of William Friedman working at his desk at Arlington Hall Station. (Friedman worked there during World War II and until the mid-1950s, when he retired.)

Recently, we discovered this photograph of a different spot in his office. The officer on the right is Paul Neff, who had been a cryptologist in the European theater of World War II and, after the war, became a senior manager in the

COMSEC organization (communications security, predecessor to today's Cybersecurity). The officer on the left is unidentified.

Behind them, on the left end of the mantle is a photograph of Elizebeth Friedman, William's wife and a brilliant cryptanalyst in her own right. We cannot get the framed photograph on the wall clear enough to identify it, but some of the figures are wearing pre-World War I uniforms, and those pictured had autographed the print.

Adorning Friedman's bookcase to the right is a hand-lettered sign with the quotation, "Sweet analysis, 'tis thee hast ravished me." The quote is attributed to Dr. Faustus. (The quote is a paraphrase of a line of dialogue from Christopher Marlowe's play, *Dr. Faustus*, although in Marlowe's version, it was "magic" that had ravished Faust.) This sort of quotation likely had great appeal to Friedman, who had an offbeat sense of humor.

The 1947 date superimposed on the photograph cannot be verified. In studying the photograph collection from Arlington Hall Station, CCH staff has found that some markings are the date the picture was snapped; some are a later date when the photograph was processed for filing (sometimes one year or more later).

A photograph that was likely intended to be a keepsake of an official visit or an award ceremony reveals some interesting facets of the life of its central figure.

508 caption: William Friedman standing in front of a tall fireplace, a uniformed Army officer on each side, a glassed-in bookcase to the right.